

Testimony by
Michael P. Meotti
Commissioner of Higher Education
before the
Appropriations Committee
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Good morning Chairman Harp, Chairman Geragosian, members of the Committee. For the record, I am Michael P. Meotti, Commissioner of Higher Education. I come before you today to discuss the critical importance of strong policy leadership to address one of the most alarming issues facing our state: the decline in the educational attainment of our citizens.

We cannot permit a state that has built its success on the knowledge base of its people to decline in our level of education. We have no choice. Studies abound proving the more educated our workers, the higher their incomes, the better our economy. Especially in these perilous times, we cannot afford to let the key competitive advantage of our economy wither away.

But we must recognize that this is not merely a matter of education policy, instruction or academics; nor can it be addressed by any one campus or organization or by realigning any organizational chart. Rather, this is a public policy challenge that can only be solved by high profile leadership that can help us recognize the challenge and build a broad-based commitment on how to get results. This leadership must build collaboration across schools and campuses, engage our state's employers and mobilize regional collaborations that tackle the challenge at the ground level.

Education drives many positive results related directly to your work on "results-based accountability." Educated people are more likely to be healthy, more likely to actively engage in assuring the safety and quality of their neighborhoods, and, as I have said, more likely to get jobs.

Two recent reports by regional Federal Reserve Banks capture the essence of what we have come to know.

First, for every 1% gain in the education level of a metropolitan region, there is a corresponding increase of 2.3% in the region's economy (as measured by gross domestic product).

Second, the wide variation in state income levels across the United States during the second half of the 20th century is primarily explained by two factors: education level of the state's population and the number of patents registered by residents of the state. Connecticut is featured, along with similar states such as Massachusetts and Maryland, as prime examples of how these factors have driven economic success. The authors of the report recommend that states seeking to increase residents' income must "increase the knowledge base."

Where does Connecticut stand?

- In 1990, Connecticut was tied for first in the nation with Massachusetts with 27.2% of adults with a college education.
- By 2000, Connecticut had dropped to fourth among all states and may drop further in our competitive position over time.

We must realize that this is a competitive environment and forward progress alone is not sufficient. Connecticut's growth in education levels must surpass, or at least keep pace with, other states and nations if we are to retain our competitive edge.

There are storm clouds on our horizon.

- New England 2020, a report commissioned by the Nellie Mae Foundation, projects that Connecticut's percentage of young adults with a college education will decline by the year 2020.
- The alarming reality we face is that only one in four, or 25%, of Connecticut students in 9th grade today will earn a two-year or four-year college degree during the next ten years.

The bottom line is that the education level of our state's population will shape our future economic success more than any other factor. Connecticut can invest heavily in programs that fall under the traditional label of "economic development," but these investments cannot pay off if our education level stagnates or declines.

Who will meet this challenge?

The University of Connecticut will certainly play a role, but it can only focus on the students who enroll there. UCONN cannot solve a societal problem. The same is true whether we speak of the Connecticut State University System, the Community Colleges, Charter Oak State College or the private colleges in Connecticut. Each system and campus can only effect the portion of the state's population that it directly serves.

A significant obstacle to any campus-based effort to increase graduation rates is the large number of Connecticut students who graduate from high school and enroll in a Connecticut public institution but are not ready for college-level course work. Over half of the recent high school graduates entering the community college system test as needing developmental math work before taking college-level math. A substantial number of these students also need remediation in English. While the numbers may be lower, the problem also is faced at all of our four-year public institutions.

Nor can we expect Connecticut's high schools to solve this problem on their own. There are many components to the college readiness issue, not the least of which may be related to the teacher education system and the supply of graduates in critical shortage areas such as math and science. And even students who are academically ready for college may not succeed if their first-year college experience does not connect them to their new environment. This is especially true for students coming from families without a history of college-going.

Even if we got all the educational issues squared away, we also must recognize that many students drop out because of life challenges apart from the campus. These include problems with transportation, childcare, finances and the need to support children and other family members. In order to make progress with this segment of the student population, we will need active collaboration with a range of existing community services.

What must we all do to meet this challenge?

To meet a public policy challenge of this magnitude, we need solutions that cut across higher education systems, campuses, schools, and many segments of society. Connecticut needs public policy leadership that makes everyone aware of the challenge, highlights its affect on our state's future, and builds broad-based consensus on strategies to get the results we need to increase the education level of our state's population.

It is too much to ask of a State Department of Education already struggling with challenges in meeting the requirements of the Sheff decision, providing hands-on support for priority school districts, and implementing a new statewide initiative on early childhood education to be able to engage the issues of higher education to the extent that we need.

We must address the following fundamental issues if we want results.

First, student transition. Nearly 15,600 Connecticut high school graduates enroll in a public two-year or four-year college within a year after leaving high school. Many go in large numbers from a small number of high schools to one community college or CSU campus. We must address not only academic readiness but also personal readiness of these students. The Department of Higher Education is the only organization that can champion a comprehensive approach working with the State Department of Education, higher education institutions and the wide range of existing community investments intended to support students most at-risk of not succeeding in that transition from high school to college.

Second, student transfer. We know that Connecticut students are part of a national trend to earn a degree by attending more than one college. As in other states, DHE is the best source of leadership to build a comprehensive system of credit transfer that helps students succeed and does not place the risk on them of taking courses that cannot transfer to other

colleges. Our Department is also the only organization that can assure that all institutions comply with whatever comprehensive system we create.

Third, regional cooperation. We must recognize that adopting a state policy does not make anything happen. Results must be realized on the ground in schools, on campuses, at workplaces and in neighborhoods. There is a regional connection to many of the collaborations we need to foster. The Department of Higher Education is ideally constituted to foster the creation of regional leadership efforts aimed at increasing educational attainment.

Fourth, securing national and private support. We must take advantage of the increasing level of national attention to the issue of educational attainment. The federal government is likely to become a much more active player in promoting increased education levels and will join the existing high level of interest shown by major national foundations, employers and Connecticut philanthropy. These types of funders are very sensitive to leadership commitment before they will invest their money. A bureau within the State Department of Education does not signify the kind of commitment they seek.

Our history of economic success has been built on the knowledge base of our state's residents. Connecticut's future will be defined by how well we protect and grow this asset. No public challenge is met without strategic leadership. No effort that requires collaboration across many systems and organizations can succeed without high profile leadership. The Department of Higher Education is, and must continue to be, more than the sum of its individual programs if Connecticut is to meet the challenge and increase the knowledge base of Connecticut's people. The Department is ready for this challenge and eagerly seeks to be accountable for its role in delivering the results our state needs.

Thank you.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

[HTTP://WWW.CTDHE.ORG](http://www.ctdhe.org)

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Department of Higher Education, working with the Board of Governors for Higher Education, serves as the state policy-making and coordinating agency for higher education. Its mission is to increase lifelong access to, and success in, higher education to serve the needs of the state, its employers and its citizens. To support this mission, the department manages the strategic framework for defining system priorities, facilitating collaboration across institutions and among state policymakers, and promoting institutional quality as well as student access and success.

The Department of Higher Education works to build a postsecondary system of distinctive strengths that, through targeted state investment, will increase the educational attainment level of Connecticut citizens and, in so doing, advance the prosperity of the state as a whole.

In fall of 2008, a record 184,544 students enrolled in Connecticut's public and independent colleges and universities

for an annual growth of 3.2 percent, the largest in 20 years. Each year, the state's institutions of higher education award about 36,500 degrees. Since 1990, the last enrollment peak, degrees awarded per 100,000 population have increased 23 percent. More people – high school graduates, adults, women and members of minority groups – are entering and completing post-secondary education than ever before; maintaining accessibility and affordability in higher education will allow them to continue to do so for the benefit of the entire state.

Outcome Measure

	1990	2008
Degrees Conferred per 100,000 Population	850	1,042

COORDINATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Statutory Reference

C.G.S. Section 10a-1 through 10a-53.

Statement of Need and Program Objectives

To provide a vision for the future of higher education in Connecticut based on evaluation of the state's needs.

To establish statewide policy and guidelines for the Connecticut system of public higher education through the decisions and recommendations of the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

To staff the Board of Governors and, under the policy direction of that board, to coordinate the development and operation of the state higher education system under the leadership of the commissioner of higher education.

The Department coordinates policy-making for higher education by developing policies on tuition, fees and student aid. Tuition policies include the 15 percent cap on tuition growth, a 15 percent set-aside of tuition to fund need-based financial aid, and an inter-state tuition program through the New England Board of Higher Education that saves Connecticut students nearly \$8 million and gains \$3 million for Connecticut public colleges annually. In addition, the current federal stimulus package charges the state's higher education agency with the management of infrastructure renewal funding.

The Department also licenses and accredits academic programs and institutions (both public and independent). In 2008, there were 137 applications for new programs, 115 programs terminated and three ordered to cease operations. As part of its

active involvement in protecting students the Department served 887 students in the closing of Gibbs College and convened partners among nine other institutions to establish transfer and articulation agreements which ensure degree completion.

The Alternate Route to Certification Program conducts summer and academic year programs to prepare career-changers to become teachers, especially in shortage fields. The programs annually graduate more than 200 new teachers, 85 percent of whom are hired within six months.

The Minority Advancement Program (MAP) Provides early intervention programs at the high school level (ConnCAP) to increase the pool of qualified minority students for higher education and provides a performance-based grant program to focus on retention. During the 2008 program year, 97 percent of ConnCAP's 159 high school seniors graduated, and 145 or 94 percent planned to enroll in a college or university.

The state's National Service Initiative, which is administered and staffed by the department, underwrites service jobs in areas of community need as well as funding the Connecticut State Employee Mentoring and Tutoring Program

Private Occupational School oversight provides a means to ensure the overall quality and financial viability of some 68 institutions, with an identified 23 branches, enrolling 22,000 students and generating \$116 million in net tuition revenues. An average four inquiries on opening a school are logged per week. In 2008, three new schools were licensed and 20 schools reauthorized, 22 complaints were filed on existing schools, and four schools closed (one of which closed out of compliance

resulting in 70 student complaints). There were three changes of ownership and four notices of violations, 150 revisions to certificates of authorization and 11 schools are under quarterly financial review.

The Baden-Württemberg, Germany Sister-State Exchange Program provides funding for language instruction and scholarships to 55 Connecticut students on exchange in Germany and 41 German students on exchange here.

The department, as the state's Approving Agency for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, renders the services to inspect, approve and provide technical assistance to those educational

institutions qualified to furnish instruction to veterans and other eligible persons through the relevant provisions of the GI Bill.

The Educational and Employment Information Center (EEIC) is a statewide referral and information service for anyone who has questions about learning and careers. It provides free and objective information about courses, job training, student financial aid and college preparation. In 2008, the Center handled 10,873 inquiries centering on educational counseling, financial and the Alternate Route to Certification.

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Statutory Reference

C.G.S. Sections 10a-6, 10a-22, 10a-40, 10a-65, and 10a-163 through 10a-169

Statement of Need and Program Objectives

To increase access for qualified and needy residents to educational opportunities at public and private post-secondary educational institutions by providing various forms of student financial assistance grants, scholarships, loans, and part-time employment.

To aid in meeting the state's workforce needs through targeted grant and loan assistance programs to residents enrolled in a variety of academic programs.

The student financial assistance administered by the department is comprised of a diversity of specially tailored programs that provide direct and indirect state and federal grant and loan reimbursement aid to Connecticut residents. There are five major programs.

The Capitol Scholarship Program provides awards to students based on academic merit and financial need. The maximum award for students attending in-state institutions is \$3,000. Recipients who take their awards to institutions in the eight states with reciprocal agreements receive a maximum award of \$500. Connecticut is currently receiving more funding from the reciprocal states than is disbursed to them. More than 91 percent of program funds go to students attending in-state institutions and current funding generates a federal match of

nearly \$1 million. In 2008, 5,707 awards were made at an average award of \$1,739.

The Minority Teacher Incentive Program provides annual \$5,000 awards to minority students in teacher training programs and provides those graduates who teach in Connecticut schools with annual \$2,500 stipends to assist in repayment of college loans. The maximum award, grants and loans combined, for each participant is \$20,000. In 2008, the program's eleventh year, 158 awards were made, including stipends to 65 recipients teaching in Connecticut schools.

The Connecticut Independent College Student Grant Program (CICSG) provides grant assistance to Connecticut residents attending private institutions in the state. In FY 2008, this program funded an average award of \$4,067 to 5,922 students.

The Connecticut Aid for Public College Students Program (CAPCS) provides grant assistance to Connecticut residents attending state supported colleges in Connecticut. In 2008, this program funded an average award of \$1,796 to 16,821 students.

The Connecticut Aid to Charter Oak provides grant assistance to Connecticut residents attending Charter Oak State College. In 2008, this program was fully funded and served 105 students at an average award of \$565.

Federal programs include the State Student Incentive Grant Program, the Paul Douglas Teacher Loan Program, the Robert C. Byrd Scholarship Program, The Gear-Up Scholarship Trust, and the College Access Challenge Grant.

Alternate Route to Certification Program

Local, State and National Recognition for ARC Graduates 2007 & 2008

2008 Bloomfield Teacher of the Year

Jesse White, 2001 ARC I – Biology, General science teacher at Carmen Arace Middle School
http://www.blmfld.org/uploaded/photos/cams-middle/jesse/jessewhite_files/JesseWhite1.htm

2008 Carmen Arace Middle School Teacher of the Year - Bloomfield

Pamela Parker, 1999 ARC I - English

2008 Windsor High School Teacher of the Year

Jaf Chiang, 1999 ARC I - mathematics & current ARC Faculty Member

2008 Family and Consumer Science Teacher of the Year for Connecticut

Pat Goff, 2003 ARC II – Rockville High School, Vernon

2008 Siemens Award for Advancement Placement Teaching in Connecticut

Keirsten Huttig, 1995 ARC I - Biology - Simsbury High School & current ARC Faculty Member

2008 World Language Teacher of the Year – Spanish, Conard High School

Juan Melian, 1997 ARC I – Spanish teacher at Conard High School– Current Asst. Principal of Sedgwick Middle School

2008 - Windsor Teacher of the Year

2008 – Semifinalist for Connecticut Teacher of the Year

2006-07 Middle School Teacher of the Year by the Connecticut Association of Schools

Terry McSweeney, 1998 ARC I & current ARC Faculty Member
Middle School Social Studies, Sage Park Middle School, Windsor

2007 Connecticut Teacher of the Year

Christopher Poulos, 2001 ARC I – Spanish teacher at Joel Barlow High School in Redding
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=321784>

2007 Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics

Teresa Bulanda, 2001 ARC I – middle school mathematics – Fox Middle School, Hartford
http://www.paemst.org/controllers/awardee.cfc?method=find_awardee

2007 Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Science

Jon Swanson, 1998 ARC I – Biology teacher at E.O. Smith High School, Storrs
http://www.paemst.org/controllers/awardee.cfc?method=find_awardee

2007 Teacher of the Year for the Connecticut Technical Schools

Martin Sagendorf, 2000 ARC I graduate - physics teacher at Kaynor Technical High School, Waterbury

2007 Connecticut Northeast Regional Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year

Deborah Crawford, 2004 ARC I – middle school math

Department of Higher Education

RBA: The Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program

- **Quality of Life Goal:** All CT PreK-12 students will receive a high quality education
- **Purpose/Customers:** To prepare mid-career adults for careers in teaching and education, specifically in designated shortage areas
- **Enrollment Rate:** 25-40% of applicant depending on available slots and candidate qualifications
- **Number of graduates since 1988 (first year of ARC):** 3,736
- **Number of first-time teacher certificates issued by the State Department of Education from January 2001 – August 2008**

Secondary, 7-12:	1,017	
Middle Grades, 4-8:	347	
Special Subjects, PreK-12:	523	Total: 1,887

Please note that there is a distinction between the first-time certificates issued for ARC graduates vs. those issued to graduates from traditional programs. ARC graduates are only issued a first-time certificate upon official hire by a public school system, whereas traditional graduates may apply for a first-time certificate without employment. Thus, the data for ARC certificates issued is a true indication of hiring need and district response.

- **Breakdown by shortage area from January 2001 – August 2008**

92 % - "other" languages, such as Chinese and Arabic	33 % - Spanish
92 % - elementary level world language instruction	58 % - Latin
60 % - German	55 % - French
78 % - middle and high school math	98 % - bilingual education
48 % - physics	52 % - chemistry
72 % - middle school general science	23 % - biology
66 % - middle and high school English	

- ARC has consistently been the **largest preparer** of teachers in 7-12 mathematics, physics, biology, Spanish, chemistry, French, German, Latin, and other languages; K-6 world language instruction; and, PreK-12 bilingual education from 2001-2008.
- **Average Hiring Rate Within Six Months of Program Completion:** 85%
- **Average Retention Rate:** 80% compared to 79% for non-ARC counterparts
- **Retention Highlights: 2002-2006 Graduates** (No. of survey respondents as of 2/10/09 = 539)

Issued 90-day immediately post-ARC:	87 %
Still teaching:	86 %
Currently teaching in urban districts:	30 %
Currently teaching in suburban districts:	41 %
Will teach for at least 10 more years:	14 %
Will teach for more than 10 additional years:	46 %
Will no longer teach:	6 %
Would complete ARC or similar program all over again:	92 %

- **Number of current certification offerings via ARC:** 13